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## CHAP-BOOK LITERATURE.

It has been said that the ballads of a people possess a greater influence than their laws. If this assertion be strictly correct, how much more potential must be the impulse, towards good or evil, derived from their books! Many must recollect the old chap-books, as they were technically termed, of their younger days: books—if it be not a misnomer to designate such vile and worthless trash by so worthy an appellation—that were hawked about the country by chapman or pedler, and sold in farmhouse and cottage to a class who, at that period, were unfortunately unable to obtain a healthier description of mental sustenance. These books, however, have now almost wholly disappeared in this country, from a cause we shall notice ere we conclude: but in France, the multitude and mischievous nature of such publications were sufficient to attract the attention of government; and, apart from any political considerations, and merely as a protection for the minds of the young and uneducated, it was determined to establish a censorship over the *littérature du colportage*—the chap-books of the French. In the latter part of 1852, a number of commissioners, men well known for their knowledge of books and literature, were appointed by M. Maupas, minister of police, to examine and report on these publications. They had full powers to call in every work circulated by colportage; and in order to insure the strictest censorship, a law was enacted prohibiting colporteurs or pedlers from carrying any book not bearing a government stamp, and no book was permitted to be stamped unless approved by the commissioners. These officials had no sooner commenced their sittings, than they were overwhelmed by a deluge of no less than 7500 books from all parts of France. To their astonishment, they found amongst them books that had been continually reprinted, without alteration, since the sixteenth century. Books of sorcery, magic, charms, invocation of spirits, and other similar absurdities, long supposed to have been out of print, that were treasured as curiosities in public libraries and in the cabinets of book-collectors, were actually discovered to be still published and sold in the remoter districts of France. Even Macabre's *Dance of Death*, with the horribly hideous old wood-cuts, which the collectors of rare books were glad to give pounds for, was found to be still sold to the peasants of the Landes for a few sous.

The publishers being anxious that the almanacs should be examined first, so that they might be ready for the annual demand, the commissioners commenced their duties with this class of books, of which an immense number are annually circulated in France.

VOL. IV.

The most popular of all the French almanacs, produced in an almost innumerable variety of forms and in immense quantities, is the *Almanach Liegeois*. Why term it the Almanac of Liege? Surely the Almanac of Paris would be a better title. Not at all. All these almanacs, no matter how different they may be from each other, are composed—so their title-pages inform us—by Matthieu Laensbergh, a learned astrologer, and canon of the ecclesiastical establishment named St Bartholomew, in the ancient city of Liege. Indeed, Laensbergh himself can claim a venerable antiquity, being the veritable Old Parr of almanac-makers. His first was published in 1636, some sixty years previous to the appearance of our own less celebrated, but still pretty notorious, Francis Moore, physician. Anti-quaries, however, although they are obliged to concede a name to this Francis Moore, are very doubtful whether he ever had a local habitation, or was merely a mystical personage imagined by the worshipful company of stationers; and we are bound in candour to confess, that the actual existence in the flesh of Matthieu Laensbergh is equally problematical. For though there is a romantic story of his niece's marriage to Gerard Dow, the celebrated painter, apparently in defiance, yet really in fulfilment of her destiny, as predicted by the canonical astrologer—though Dow's famous picture of an astrologer, now in the Louvre, is said to be his veritable portrait—though in the families of the Straels, and their successors the Boquignons, who for nearly two centuries have been typographers at Liege, there are some traditionary stories anent this Matthieu Laensbergh—still a reference to the archives of St Bartholomew proves that there never was a canon of that name.

The *Almanach Liegeois* is a most convenient one for persons who are unable to read, for, by certain symbols attached to certain dates, the most unlettered persons can follow its instructions: thus the rude representation of a phial announces the proper phase of the moon under which a draught of medicine should be taken—a pill-box designates the planet most propitious for pills—a pair of scissors points out the proper period for cutting hair—a lancet, for letting blood. The untutored Indian of North America takes nature as his guide, and sows his maize when the young oak-leaf has acquired the size of a squirrel's foot; but the French peasant, less wise in his generation, refers to Laensbergh for the lucky seed-time, and finds it indicated by the representation of a sieve. Yet, though it be now the almanac of the lower classes, it was not so at one time. In 1774, it predicted that in the April of that year a royal favourite would play her last part. Madame Dubarry, fearing the prediction applied to

herself, repeatedly exclaimed: 'I wish this villainous month of April was over.' The month passed, but Louis XV. died in the ensuing May: the lady's last part was actually played; and the credit of Matthieu Laensbergh was more firmly established than before.

From prophetic almanacs, it is but a step to the more strictly legitimate prophets; and the most remarkable of this class, one whose writings are still read with awe and wonder, whose prophecies have been translated into every European language, and have had almost as many commentators as the dramas of Shakspeare, was the famous Michel Nostradamus, better known by his Latinised appellation of Nostradamus. Unlike our English prophets Nixon, Mother Shipton, and others—all of a humble rank in life—Nostradamus was born of a good family, and a descendant, by his mother's side, of a line of celebrated Jewish physicians. Selecting the medical profession, he soon rose to eminence, being particularly skilful in his treatment of the plague, at that period the scourge of Europe. But, distressed by the loss of his wife and child, and persecuted by the envious malice of less successful physicians, he retired from practice, and composed seven centuries of prophecies, which were first published in 1555. He at once became famous. Catharine de Medicis, naturally superstitious, invited the prophet to court, where he was received, and treated with the highest honours. He subsequently retired to Salon, published three more centuries of prophecies, and after being visited by several princes and crowned heads, died in 1566. His prophecies are written in quatrains, of which there are ten centuries, making in all 4000 lines. They are an incoherent mass of obscure and mystical extravagances, such as might have been written by a well-informed man of disordered intellect. Yet so many and varied are the vicissitudes of men and nations, it would be strange if some one or other of those 4000 lines did not bear a seeming application or allusion to some subsequent event, and thus receive the credit of being a veritable prophecy. Accordingly, the followers of Nostradamus aver that he predicted of the misfortunes and manner of death of Mary Queen of Scots, whom he had seen in her youthful splendour as queen of France—the massacre of St Bartholomew—the battle of Lepanto—the Gunpowder Plot—and many other memorable events.

Few prophets gain name and fame in their own time and country; but Nostradamus was an exception to the general rule. The unexpected death of Henry II. of France, who was accidentally killed by a splinter of a broken lance entering his eye, and penetrating to the brain, when engaged in a tilting-match with Count Montgomery, spread the fame of the prophet over all Europe; for in his prophecies, published four years previous to the melancholy occurrence, was a quatrain, which we translate as follows:—

The young lion shall overcome the old one,  
In martial field by a single duel.  
In a golden cage he shall put out his eye.  
Two wounds from one he shall die a cruel death.

We need not enter into the elaborate explanations given of this quatrain by the commentators, further than to say, that the golden cage is supposed to refer to the golden helmet of the unfortunate monarch. We would rather place before the reader the most famous of the prophetic quatrains relating to England. The forty-ninth of the ninth century is really a remarkable one; and its number, by believers in the prophetic power of Nostradamus, is supposed to refer to the year 1649, in which the predicted event took place. The reader will remember that the book before

us, from which we translate it, was most undoubtedly published in 1588:—

Ghent and Brussels shall march against Antwerp.  
The senate of London shall put to death their king.  
The salt and wine shall not be able to succour him,  
That they may have the kingdom into ruin.

Another quatrain is said to predict the great fire of London in 1666:—

The blood of the just shall be wanting in London.  
Burned by fire of three twenty and six.  
The ancient dame shall fall from her high place.  
Of the same sect many shall be destroyed.

The Restoration, and the defenceless state of London when the Dutch fleet was master of the Thames, is supposed to be thus predicted in another quatrain:—

The endeavour of the North shall be great.  
Upon the ocean the gate shall be open.  
The kingdom in the island shall be re-established.  
London shall quake for fear of sails discovered.

Although the predictions of Nostradamus purported to extend from his own time to the coming of Antichrist, they were not copious enough for the cupidity of the publishers and the gullibility of the people. Accordingly, the *posthumous* prophecies of the deceased seer have also been put into extensive circulation. But how were they obtained? Very easily. The tomb of Nostradamus was opened, and the venerable prophet discovered, seated in a brazen chair, and writing with an iron pen on tablets of ivory. But two ghastly men-at-arms, in complete suits of mail, guarded the portals of this mystic vault. No one dared to pass these terrible figures. At last, two convicts, who had been condemned to death, stimulated by the promise of a free pardon and munificent reward, consented to enter the tomb and seize the tablets. They succeeded in the attempt, and thus the posthumous predictions of the great man can be sold for the small sum of three sous. To this circumstantial detail, there is added a full-length portrait in wood of one of the men-at-arms; and we can only say, that if the original was half as hideous, the convicts must have been brave men indeed!

Accounts of indecent, mischievous, and roguish jokes, tricks, and adventures have ever been great favourites with the lower classes, and consequently in good demand as chap-books. The first English specimen purports to be the adventures of Scogan—no doubt the Scogan alluded to by Shakspeare, whose head, as Justice Shallow tells us, was broken by Falstaff 'at the court-gate, when he was a crack, not thus high.' He well deserved to have his head broken many a time and oft; for his adventures were low, filthy, practical jokes, that now-a-days would be rewarded by a number of spells at the crank, and a few months' residence in a house of correction. Dr Andrew Borde, from whom we derive the term Merry-andrew, published this work in the reign of Henry VIII.; but there are great doubts whether Scogan ever perpetrated such tricks. From what little persevering bookworms can ferret out respecting him, he appears to have been a gentleman, a courtier, and a poet, utterly incapable of such practices. In the same manner, a once common Scottish chap-book, a tissue of similar indecencies, is asserted to be the adventures of Buchanan, the illustrious scholar, poet, and historian. In all probability, the low sharpeners who first issued such books, ascribed the deeds detailed in them to men of eminence, thereby to insure popularity and sale; for we find the very same expedient had recourse to in France, where a book of an exactly similar class is entitled the *Adventures of the Duke de Roquelaure*, who lived in the seventeenth century, and displayed great abilities both as a statesman and a general. The adventures ascribed to

Roquelaire are fully as disgusting as those attributed to Scogan and Buchanan; but the French work is seasoned with some approaches to wit, a quality of which both the English and Scotch works are entirely deficient.

A presentable extract from Roquelaire may amuse. It seems that when travelling he used a very mean equipage, and dressed in a very shabby manner. Passing through Lyon in this guise, he was observed by the bishop of the diocese, who was afflicted with an insatiable appetite for news. The bishop, seeing a stranger traveller of mean appearance, thought he had only a plebeian to deal with, and wishing to gratify his ruling passion, cried out: 'Hi! hi!' Roquelaire immediately desired his postilion to stop, and the curious prelate advancing to the carriage, demanded:

'Where have you come from?'

'Paris,' was the curt reply.

'What is there fresh in Paris?'

'Green pease.'

'But what were the people saying when you came away?'

'Vespers.'

'Goodness, man! who are you? What are you called?'

'Ignorant and uneducated persons call me Hi! hi! but gentlemen term me the Duke de Roquelaire. Drive on, postilion.' The duke passed on, leaving the astounded bishop staring after the carriage.

Germany or Holland—for there have been learned controversies on the subject—furnishes a work of a similar description, entitled the *Adventures of Eulenspiegel*, considered to have been the precursor of the Rabelais school. This work has been translated into most of the European languages; but as the point of its jokes is chiefly directed against the Reformation and the Protestant faith, it never became popular in England. In France, however, it has passed through almost innumerable editions, and has actually given two new words to the language—*espigle* (waggish), and *espiglerie*, being derived literally from *Eulenspiegel*.

Human nature being nearly the same in all countries, it follows that there must be a similarity in their literature. Thus we find in the French chap-books, as in our own, the lives of pirates and robbers: the English Jack Sheppard is rivalled in deeds of crime by the continental Cartouche. Again, as in our chap-books, the canny Scot, the blundering Irishman, and the simple Cockney were severally held up to ridicule, so in France the Norman, Gascon, and Breton share a similar fate. There is one class of works, however, very common in France, that are utterly unknown in this country: these are stories of the camp and barrack-room, written in the peculiar military slang of the French soldier. Some are recitals of battles and sieges, as supposed to have been related by an old soldier; and these are often spoken at fairs and other public places by a man dressed in an old uniform. We would have given a sample of this curious kind of composition, but a translation of the best we have ever met with has been already published in *Chambers's Edinburgh Journal*.\*

Some few of the French chap-books were found by the commissioners to be of a much superior class to those we have alluded to. *St Pierre's Paul and Virginia*, *Madame Cottin's Elizabeth*, and the *Gil Blas* of Le Sage are as popular in their native country as they are here. Of translations from English works, *Robinson Crusoe* holds the first rank in popular favour; next to the world-renowned mariner of York, is a traveller of another description—no other than our old friend *Lemuel Gulliver*; while *Thaddeus of Warsaw* holds the third place. Among the less popular translations, we

find the Irish stories of Banim that refer to political events; another Irish political novel, *The Hearts of Steel*; one or two of Galt's works; and some of Mrs Opie's tales. There are a few other works, said to be translated from the English; but as we never heard of their titles, or even their authors' names, we forbear to mention them. But the *Vicar of Wakefield*, and the *Old English Baron*, are unfortunately unknown in the literature of colportage.

We have said that as many as 7500 works were sent in to the commissioners. The retail-price of these books varied from one sou to a franc, and their annual sale amounted to 9,000,000 francs. Yet such was their quality, that more than three-fourths of this large number were condemned, being considered utterly unfit for circulation. The publishers then sent in nearly a sufficient quantity to replace the rejected works, but the greater part of these were also condemned. At first, the authorities trusted to the demand for creating a supply fit for circulation, but this did not take place. The people were very properly deprived of impure and worthless publications, but there was not sufficient healthy reading to administer in their place. The question then arose, whether the government itself should supply the vacuum thus created by the censorship, or, by means of rewards and prizes, stimulate persons of talent and learning to prepare amusing and instructive books for the people. But it was considered dangerous and improper for the government to enter into direct competition with the publishers. Unfortunately, we have no means of knowing whether or how the question has been settled. All we have been able to learn is, that M. Billault, the minister of the interior, acceded to the general suggestion conveyed in the report of the commissioners—namely, that the best means of supplying the people with a sound and sufficient literature, is to create it with the express sanction and assistance of the government.

Last year, a series of lectures were delivered at the Educational Exhibition, got up by the Society of Arts, and held in St Martin's Hall. Cardinal Wiseman was one of the lecturers, and delivered an eloquent and interesting address on the Home Education of the Poor. In his lecture, he alluded to the censorship imposed on the French chap-books, and some of the newspapers inferred that he advocated the adoption of a similar system in this country. Now, without entering into the question whether the cardinal advocated such a scheme or not, we may say that, happily, it is not required here. The race of chap-books has become extinct; and even in their palmiest days, there were none resembling those we read of in the report of the French commissioners—works so disgustingly vile, that we cannot further allude to them, but yet openly published in large quantities by wealthy publishers, men of reputation and standing in society, and publicly hawked from house to house. The Newgate-Calendar school of periodicals, which the cardinal so strongly declaimed against, are the great nurseries from whence readers are drafted to the higher class of publications; nor do we state this undoubted fact theoretically, but from personal observation during the last ten years. We have all enjoyed a similar sort of rubbish in the first phase of our reading-life, just as we have sucked hard-bake, and luxuriously feasted on unripe gooseberries. Besides, the worst of the present periodicals is infinitely superior to the best of the old chap-books.

The extinction of the old chap-books was as sudden as their reign had been long and prosperous. They were in full circulation in the west of Scotland some three-and-twenty years ago, when we sailed for India: on our return, after a three years' absence, they had totally disappeared. As a contributor to this Journal, it is not our part to say what destroyed them so effectually and so suddenly—we leave the tale to be told by other witnesses. Some months past, an elderly

\* *Life of Napoleon in a Quarter of an Hour*. Vol. xii. p. 414, Second Series.

friend, living in a remote part of the country, wrote to request us to try and find for him a certain quotation from a travesty on the 'Speech of Ajax to the Grecian Chiefs,' written in the Buchan dialect. Our search was vain; till at last, thinking it might be in a collection of Scottish chap-books, preserved as curiosities in the British Museum, we referred to it, and found the required quotation. We also found, written on the inside-cover of the volume, the following words:—'This collection was made by me, James Mitchell, at Aberdeen, in 1823.' It may be considered as the library of the Scottish peasantry, the works being sold by itinerant chapmen about the country, especially at fairs. No such collection could now be made; and *Chambers's Edinburgh Journal*, and similar publications, have superseded the writings of our forefathers.

Here, then, is a solution to the difficult problem that has caused no little anxiety to the statesmen and philanthropists on the other side of the Channel. As good and cheap periodicals have, in the very nature of things, exterminated the worthless and mischievous chap-books of this country, what is to prevent similar publications from filling the place of those withdrawn from circulation in France? In gratitude to M. Nisard, secretary to the commissioners, for his amusing account\* of the literature of colportage, we humbly beg leave to draw his attention to this mode of remedying a great evil.

[We beg to inform our contributor, that several respectable periodicals, on the plan of *Chambers's Journal*, have of late years had a wide circulation in France. It may be that the gap caused by the censorship is already filled up.—Ed.]

## KATE'S CHOICE.

IN TWO CHAPTERS.—CHAP. I.

On a fine sharp morning in September, a young girl, who had been walking briskly down Oxford Street, turned into one of the quieter thoroughfares branching from it, and suddenly stopped before a large bookseller's shop. Up to this moment, her pace had been quick and unbroken, and her step decisive enough to raise a half-sneering smile on the lip of more than one young-lady lounge; but now something like hesitation crossed her face, as she glanced through the closed glass-doors into the shop. It had more of the leisure air of a select library than of a place of business—it might be impertinent to intrude her little affairs upon its dignified repose. She tapped her foot on the pavement irresolutely, while the fine colour brought to her cheek by exercise deepened to a glow.

'Am I so weak as to shrink on the threshold of my enterprise?' she asked herself; and then quickly answered her own question by a determined turn of the door-handle, and a firm step up to the counter.

'Is Mr Dalton within, and disengaged?' she asked of a pale young man in attendance.

'I will see, miss,' replied the functionary, slowly trying up a parcel of books. 'Is it essential to see Mr Dalton?' he asked without moving, and glancing languidly at the dark Tweed shawl and straw-bonnet of the lady.

'Certainly: otherwise I should not have asked to do so,' was the reply. Upon which the pale young man opened his eyes, and slowly cut the string of his parcel.

'I will thank you to ascertain at once whether Mr Dalton is engaged or not. Say Miss Ashcombe wishes to see him, and will wait his leisure.' The words were spoken with a quiet decision that effected their purpose, the dilatory youth quickly removing himself from the firm, bright eyes which watched

his progress. In a minute or two, he returned with a great addition of respect in his manner. 'Mr Dalton requested that Miss Ashcombe would amuse herself for ten minutes with any of the books.' And he ushered her forward into an inner room—a sort of small library—opening into another, and yet another similar, but larger one, beyond.

At any time but this, Kate Ashcombe would have enjoyed the permission; but now she looked impatiently at her watch. Ten minutes! Before then, I shall be a very Acres in cowardice! There was no remedy, however; so she tried to keep up her courage, and her impatience down, during the trial of delay. Full of her one idea, she was vainly trying to concentrate her attention upon *Amy Harrington*, when the now obsequious official reappeared, to inform her that Mr Dalton was at liberty, and waited her pleasure. Kate Ashcombe dropped her book somewhat direspectfully, and followed her conductor up a short flight of stairs into a little counting-house, where, from above a high desk which concealed the rest of his person, the bald head of Mr Dalton presented its shining expanse to her view. It was bent down over the paper on which he was intent, and continued so for some seconds, despite the announcement of 'Miss Ashcombe, sir!' to the great relief of Kate's throbbing pulses. A small but bright fire directly before her, gave her a social, inviting look, and she drew near it with a side-glance at so much of the aforesaid forehead as was visible.

'Large development of Benevolence,' mentally observed Kate, who had been dipping into phrenology; 'but I always knew that, or I should not have come.' Kate, now somewhat reassured, began to wonder whether he was aware of her presence, and at length gave a little indicatory cough, upon which a deep voice issuing from under the forehead said: 'I know Miss Ashcombe is waiting, but it will do her no harm.'

'Not at all,' replied Kate's now clear and pleasant voice. 'She is feeling a little more comfortable and courageous.'

A pair of blue eyes, in which sense and humour dwelt together, now raised themselves, and turned a full penetrating look upon her, while slowly wheeling round upon his stool from under the recesses of the desk, Mr Dalton leaned one arm thereupon, and confronted his visitor.

'Sit still, Miss Ashcombe,' glancing at his old leather arm-chair, of which Kate had half-unconsciously taken possession. 'We will waive all unnecessary preliminaries. Now, what is the business on hand? Have we been writing some new novel?'—with a slight sneer.

'If I had committed such an indiscretion, I don't think I should venture to speak of it to Mr Dalton,' said Kate.

'Humph!' was the reply. 'Well?'

'Mr Dalton is a thoroughly practical man, a man of business,' resumed Kate; 'and he has very little sympathy with girlish crotchets. I know, and yet I have come to ask his aid in a plan which, at the first glance, will appear to him perhaps very girlish and not a little crotchety.'

'Come to the point, madam: I never read prefaces.'

'Mr Dalton, I wish to be a governess! I wish to go to Germany.' Mr Dalton descended from his stool, and stepped in front of the fire, tall, strong, and irate.

'Kate Ashcombe! I thought you were a girl of sense. Go home!' But Kate sat still, though with a deprecatory look; while Mr Dalton put his hands under his coat-tails, and looked contemptuously at the door, personifying it as the offender.

'Stuff! nonsense!' said he to the door—'empty brains breed maggots!'

'Do you despise the office of a governess?' interrupted Kate, a little indignant. 'Is it not a right useful one?'

\* *Histoire des Livres Populaires, ou de la Littérature du Colportage.*



'The field is overcrowded: no room for those who have no business there.'

'But if I have business there? if I can prove it to be my vocation?'

'Vocation! Fiddlestick!' Kate glanced up at him—he was looking vengefully at the door; she walked up to it, and placed her back against it.

'I am the offender, Mr Dalton,' said she. 'You may as well annihilate me with your looks as your words.'

Mr Dalton was surprised into silence. Kate gave another glance.

'Oh, I do not think I can go on,' she said half aloud. 'He looks so very unpromising. How unsympathetic men are! how cruelly matter-of-fact!'

'They'd need to be so, or you women would turn them crazy,' muttered Mr Dalton, but still there was a sly gleam of humour in the corner of his eye. 'Come,' continued he, 'let me know what has put this strange fancy into your head.'

'Ah! that is right,' said Kate. 'You will hear reason, and allow me to prove myself reasonable.' But here she came to a dead stop. She had a great deal to say, and the question was where to begin. Not by an appeal to his sympathies, she thought, noting the half-defiant air with which he seemed to await her attack upon them. A shrewd thought suggested: 'Possess him of the facts of the case; his suspicion will then be no longer on the alert to detect something in the background.'

'Mr Dalton, Ellen is going to marry Alfred Crawford,' said Kate, taking her first decided plunge into the subject.

'Hey? what?' asked Mr Dalton, dropping the pen he had just placed between his lips.

'Mr Crawford, you are aware, has been visiting our house more and more frequently since my father's death: he has evidently admired Ellen for some time, and—I believe the attachment is mutual. Mamma, too, always liked Mr Crawford very much.'

'I understand. Ellen and mamma admire Crawford House very much; but the former part of the statement puzzles me rather. Alfred Crawford going to marry Ellen! Are you quite sure there is not some mistake, Kate? Women often jump to conclusions in these matters.' Kate smiled.

'Go home with me to-night, Mr Dalton, and you will find a happy trio sitting over the fire, fixing the day, discussing the trousseau, arranging the wedding-trip, and so on.'

'Blowing bubbles! a fit pastime for fools!' exclaimed Mr Dalton wrathfully. 'I always thought him an empty-headed fop.'

'You are very unjust, sir,' said Kate indignantly. 'Ellen is fair enough to make such a choice, the most natural thing in the world; and Mr Crawford has sterling qualities, which I have a right to appreciate, who know how he devoted his evenings last winter to the amusement of my dear father, reading to him by the hour together.'

'You were a listener, were you not?'

'Yes,' said Kate.

'And mamma, and mamma's Ellen, were in Hampshire?'

'Yes,' said Kate, stooping to pick up her shawl, which had fallen from the chair.

'Humph!' said Mr Dalton, taking up his pen and crunching it vigorously between his teeth.

'Therefore,' resumed Kate with a clear steady voice, 'I have a friendship of gratitude for Mr Crawford, and I hope—indeed, why should not Ellen make a good wife? Marriage will sober her, and discover to her her deeper nature.'

'Indeed! How do you know?' asked her querist, regarding her with very scrutinising eyes.

'From observation—and imagination, perhaps.'

'Ah!' said Mr Dalton, jerking his pen into the fire, and folding his arms. 'Well, Kate?'

'Mamma cannot bear to be parted from Ellen; and Ellen and Mr Crawford both wish that she should take up her home with them. But there is a difficulty, you see.'

'Is not Crawford House large enough to hold Kate too?'

'Yes, if she could submit to live there,' said Kate with a momentarily flashing eye. 'But that she will not do. Neither will she, for her sake alone, exile Ellen's mother from Ellen's home. Listen to me, Mr Dalton. Don't think so meanly of me as to imagine I am moved by a mere impulse of pride. I have deeper and better reasons. If it had not been for my father, I should have left home long before now: not that I have anything unkind to say of it, but because it did not suit me, nor I it. This happens sometimes in the world. People find themselves in a sphere out of harmony with their nature. Don't curl your lip, sir: I am speaking fact, not sentiment. What was I, as a child, where Beauty was the idol of the nursery? What but a shadow in Ellen's little world of triumph. Oh! Mr Dalton, you know that the poor little plain sister carried about a heavy heart. It was not admiration I wanted!—here Kate spoke impetuously—'but love. Mamma was always absorbed in Ellen. I was nothing to her, but a sigh after a smile. Papa had not learned to know me then. You were the first who spoke lovingly to me: at first, out of pity, but afterwards you got to like me. I know you did, and it did me more good than anything. You taught me the best lesson of my life—to love, rather than long to be loved. Mr Dalton, I know what I owe you.' She rose up and took his hand, and pressed it with no sylph-like force.

'The girl actually hurts one! her grasp is like a vice!' said Mr Dalton, turning round to his desk.

'It was better after I grew older, and found courage to separate my life from Ellen's,' went on Kate. 'To stay at home from balls, and study or read to papa, was far pleasanter. But he took up so little of my time; and after I left school, I painfully felt the want of some useful object in life. I was doing nothing. Mamma and Ellen did not need me; papa for a long time scorned a girl's society. I could not fritter away my time in young-lady trifles: I have not much of the young lady about me, you know. I began to prepare myself for my probable future.'

'Now we are getting into Don Quixote again,' soliloquised Mr Dalton, opening his ledger.

'Not at all,' said Kate. 'I merely mean that I did not think it probable I should marry.'

'And why not, pray? Do you think every man is an Alfred Crawford, to be won by the mere tinsel of a pretty face?'

'No,' said Kate reddening; 'but I am not merely plain, but unattractive, or at least not superficially attractive. It takes some little time, and perhaps some little trouble, for people to know me. And yet I have the presumption to be as difficult to be pleased as I am to please. There are few with whom I could consent to associate for life; so, you see, my chances are small in a matrimonial view. The time will come—it has come sooner than I thought—when I shall be alone. I would not, if I could, live a solitary, indolent, self-indulgent life: I will go into the world, and use the faculties given to me; I have been preparing myself by study for some time.'

'How long do these resolutions date? From last winter or the spring, hey?'

Kate's cheek flushed. She looked up clearly into those inquisitive eyes:

'Long before,' said she; 'but as soon as papa was ill, I knew my nearest duty lay at home.'

'And you did it,' said Mr Dalton emphatically. 'I

know all about you, Kate Ashcombe; I have not been blind; I have watched your quiet path of home-duty, deliberately taken, well sustained, and with no assumption of superiority over your butterfly sister. You have had your reward: your father, in his latest moments, commended you to me as "the best and dearest of daughters."

'Did he say these words? He never said as much to me.' Kate's eyes filled with glad tears.

'If any other girl made such a proposal to me, I should then to one say: "Go home, and find out your duty there." But the case is different, and the girl is different—strong-minded, energetic, high-principled. She may go; she will make her way, a useful and happy way. But why to Germany, madam?'

'Because the German language is in much repute now-a-days; I know something of it, and should like to know more. To tell the truth, I am heartily fond of it, and my fancy here, I think, may be innocently indulged.'

'There's the fox slipped out of his hole at last!' said Mr Dalton gruffly. 'I knew fancy was at the bottom of it. What do you come to me for? I'm an Englishman; what have I to do with Germany?'

'You have so many foreign correspondents; you take an interest in governesses; you know best how to direct me; you are my friend of long-standing.'

'Pooh!' But Kate's powers of persuasion now came in, and perhaps those dark intelligent eyes, with their clear single-hearted glance, were not so devoid of power as she fancied. Certain it is that Kate gathered her Tweed shawl around her with an air of triumph, and that Mr Dalton muttered to his books with a vanquished look: 'I hate romance; why wouldn't England have done as well?'

Kate now hurried into Oxford Street, and got into an omnibus, for she was not one of those young ladies who deem such a conveyance beneath their dignity. She understood her limited means, and it never came into her head to be ashamed of regulating her conduct by them. She sat in its further corner, with a glow of satisfaction on her cheek; her secretly cherished plan looked so much more tangible and practical, now she had induced Mr Dalton to foster it: a mere idea, so long as it lay silent and struggling within herself, had become a reality in Mr Dalton's common-sense grasp. Her position was fixed; her object in life clearly defined before her; she felt all the quiet energy of independence. She, too, was about to step upon a new path; and if that step must be taken boldly and singly, it rather suited her character, than to follow, like Ellen, in the footsteps of another. At least so she said to herself; and if, low down in her heart, there was a womanly whisper against this assertion, she smiled it away with a refusal to listen. Upon reaching that labyrinth of villas, St John's Wood, she turned from one of the main roads into a sort of side-grove. It was a trim retired spot, too genteel and townish to suit Kate's taste; yet there had been pleasant hours in that small, carefully tended garden, the gate of which she now opened; she knew every flower, and cared for each as we do for the pets of our own fostering. That back-parlour window, too, admitted of a pleasant seat; indeed, she remembered that, last winter, it had often held two: her work-table was there, and of course Alfred Crawford was glad to come as near to the light with his book as possible. Kate stood still for a minute; her memory was apt to present to her little vivid pictures of the past; it was not her fault that they stamped themselves so graphically upon her mind, or that just then the autumnal light upon that window brought before her a bright manly face bent over a book, with slant streaks of sunshine playing on chestnut hair. The clear air freshening round her had in it the echo of a gay, pleasant voice reading her favourite authors, and association would not let a glance, that

every now and then sought hers, escape her memory. As these truant thoughts came, a shadow passed over the animated face, the erect and energetic form drooped a little. The sound of Ellen's laugh within soon broke the spell, and Kate started, entered the house, and went upstairs.

'I thought I was a strong-minded woman,' she exclaimed with a smile of self-mockery, 'but I am weak. "Strong-minded, energetic"—ah, Mr Dalton!' Take courage, Kate; it is only the strong who so feel their weakness. It was not the first struggle that had occurred in that chamber, nor was it the first of many victories. Kate entered the parlour quiet, subdued, but steady: the momentary weakness was over. The Alfred Crawford sitting somewhat listlessly by the fire was not the too pleasant companion of her memory, but the betrothed of her sister Ellen; the voice might have the same tone, the bright hair might catch the same sunset gleam, but Kate was strong now. He sprang up to receive her with a warm greeting, placed a chair by the fire—'was sure she must be cold, sitting so long upstairs.' Kate cheerfully answered. Perhaps she thought as warm a welcome might have been given by her mother and Ellen; but she was accustomed to the careless glance of the one, and the half-fretful questioning of the other.

'Where have you been all day, Kate? You are always out of the way. You might have finished that volume for us when Mr Crawford could read no longer.'

'It would scarcely have suited Miss Ashcombe's taste, I think,' said Crawford.

Kate glanced at it—it was one of the thousand novels of the day. She smiled, while a sort of pity stole into her glance, that a man like Crawford, active and intelligent, should be compelled to waste that bright day in such occupation. Ellen was sitting on the sofa, listlessly working at an elaborate piece of embroidery; she looked as if the morning had pressed a heavy weight of hours upon her. Crawford, perhaps, had some perception of Kate's thought.

'Take a run in the garden before dinner, my dear Ellen,' said he—it will refresh you. You look quite pale beside your sister.' Ellen glanced up scornfully.

'I hate a blowsy colour,' she said; 'and I am not a pedestrian like Kate.'

Crawford walked to the window, and stood there, apparently engrossed by Kate's fuchias, but really glancing from one sister to the other. Could Kate, in her dark Cashmere, bear comparison with the fair and gaily-robed Ellen? Could spirit and intelligence bear the palm from mere beauty? Nay, it is possible, despite man's weakness; but often, unfortunately, the preference does not last long enough, or comes too late.

Gathered round the evening fire, Kate braced herself to open her plans to the small circle. She would rather meet the united brunt of opposition, if such there was to be, than run the gauntlet. And opposition there was, in the form of surprise, disapproval, and remonstrance.

'Absurd and romantic!' pronounced Mrs Ashcombe; 'indeed, I consider the idea quite a disgrace to us all.'

'Vulgar and degrading, mamma,' said Ellen. 'I can't think how Kate can take such low views of things. What do you say, Alfred?' And Crawford, who had sat silent and astonished until then, said with decision: 'I agree with you, certainly. A degradation! I should think so! Kate Ashcombe a governess!' Kate looked at him. 'Is this his view?' she said to herself. 'Mr Dalton saw no degradation in it.' Then breaking out a little indignantly:

'Where,' said she, 'is the disgrace of living according to my circumstances?'

'You have so disagreeable a way of putting things,' said Mrs Ashcombe.

'It is unkind and unsisterly,' said Crawford in a vexed tone, 'when your brother would feel himself honoured by your society.' Something jarred upon Kate's heart in this speech, and she answered a little curtly:

'Whether is it more honourable to support yourself, or to be supported by others?—"Vulgar! degrading!" What, then, is right or respectable?'

'You are angry, Kate.'

'Quite in a passion,' said Ellen, with a sneer at the heightening colour and flashing eyes. Crawford looked at Kate too, and then threw the force of his arguments and remonstrances into the scale, while Ellen curled her lip, that he should seem so anxious about it. As he grew warmer, she and her mother cooled, until, on Kate's steady persistence in her purpose, Mrs Ashcombe broke in:

'There's no arguing with Kate,' said she, 'when she's bent upon anything. Let her go. She can please herself.'

'I shall not hinder her,' said Ellen carelessly.

'She has few to please beside,' said Kate with a touch of tartness as she rose up. 'I thank you both for the permission, but it might have been given more kindly.' There was a touch on her arm in the hall. She turned round; Alfred Crawford looked earnestly in her face.

'Then you won't go with us, Kate? Dear Kate, think again.'

'I thank you—I cannot.' Kate resisted the pleading glance, and loosened her hand from his. She drew her breath quickly as she ran into her own room. 'What does he mean? What does he think a woman's heart is made of?' Tears came; and the heart that had borne so bravely, yielded for a while.

But Kate was not conquered; it was perhaps her last hour of weakness. The next evening, Mr Dalton called, and discussed the affair in a tone that greatly altered Mrs Ashcombe's and Ellen's. The dead husband's friend and counsellor, the plain practical man of business, approved and supported Kate—that made all the difference. Henceforth no more opposition. Crawford no longer ventured a word, though he glanced at Mr Dalton with a dissatisfied air, that questioned his business with the affair at all. If that was a time of probation for Kate, it soon came to an end. Mr Dalton had heard of an excellent school in Frankfort, and there he advised Kate to study for at least three months; in that time, she would familiarise herself with the people and manners of a strange land, and be on the spot to select her position. Kate admired the clear-sightedness of this arrangement, and embraced it at once, although the offer of protection in her journey, by an old friend of Mr Dalton, obliged her to take her departure much sooner than she had intended; but Ellen dispensed with her assistance in her bridal preparations, and gave her free leave to waive that consideration. So Kate quitted her home one drear morning in October, with no very heart-breaking farewells, under the kind escort of her father's friend. He even accompanied her to Dover, and saw her fairly on board the Ostend packet, and in charge of his old friend Mr Liston—a kindness which almost overwhelmed Kate, for she knew how much against his habits was such a proceeding. She clasped his hand with a very lingering pressure; she felt as if she should yield after all, if he did but say 'Stay!' But he only said 'Good-by, my girl,' in an apparently careless way, and hurried over the gangway long before the bell began to ring. 'He might have given me a fatherly kiss,' thought Kate; and she sat down and cried quietly, with her head turned aside, and her tears dropping into the water.

In this brief sketch of Kate's history, it does not come within our purpose to follow her across the Channel, or step with her into 'Fatherland.' It is enough that the energy which formed the resolution

did not fail when put to the test. She made the very best use of her opportunities in the Frankfort school, and actually enjoyed her position there among the frank-hearted German girls. Before the end of the quarter, she departed with one of these to her home near Cologne, to take up her abode with Madame Töpfer as private governess to her niece. To dwell in a somewhat isolated German country-house with an elderly lady and one young girl, might not seem a very inviting position; and we do not speak of difficulties and unpleasantnesses—of struggles with English prepossessions, if not prejudices—and, still more, of the home-yearnings of an English heart—because it is enough that Kate overcame these, and made for herself a home with the old lady and Minnie Töpfer.

## THE RUSSIAN NAVY AND RUSSIAN SAILORS.

THE marvel is, not that the Russian navy is of such recent creation, but that Russia should possess a navy at all. The first essential to the formation and the maintenance of a fleet, is a sufficient body of competent native seamen; and where are those seamen to come from, unless the nation has a commercial marine of adequate extent to furnish them after a due training? This Russia does not possess—for her merchant-ships are very few in number, in all not so many, we believe, as belong to a single second-rate British port—and, consequently, there is no natural nursery for seamen. Nor is this all. The peculiar geographical position of Russia is such, that, as every reader is aware, she is almost entirely shut out from the main ocean; and on her coasts in the inland seas, very few really good ports exist. It is evident, therefore, that the Russian navy is, so to speak, a sort of artificial and forced creation—built, manned, and kept up, generation after generation, at enormous cost, for obvious political purposes.

The origin of the Russian navy is perfectly unexampled in the history of the world. Well may the Russians glorify and venerate the name and memory of Peter the Great, for to him they owe all their institutions—everything that raised them from the condition of an isolated and half-barbarous people to an influential rank among the nations of Europe. Everybody has read of Peter becoming practically acquainted with the art of ship-building, by labouring as a common shipwright in both England and Holland, and subsequently compelling some of his young nobility to follow his example, and how he taught himself the elements of seamanship on board an English-built sloop. In a few years he formed the nucleus of a fleet; and at the commencement of the eighteenth century, he fought the Swedes with success on Lake Peipus, and subsequently on the great Ladoga. Until this epoch, the Swedes had always been the undisputed masters of the coasts of the Baltic provinces, and of those of the Gulf of Finland, &c. Peter steadily, and, considering his limited maritime resources, and the obstacles he had to encounter, with astonishing energy and rapidity persevered in his novel undertaking; and in less than a score of years, he had a considerable fleet of galleys, gun-boats, and frigates, some of the latter being almost line-of-battle ships in size. In 1715, he surprised the Swedish fleet, at no great distance from the Aland Islands, and entirely defeated it, after a severe action, in which the Swedes lost many of their largest ships. Peter thought fit to reward himself for this victory by

promotion to the rank of vice-admiral, on his return in triumph to his newly founded capital of St Petersburg. Henceforth, Russia was a naval power—in her own waters at least; and although the succeeding sovereigns varied considerably in the degree of interest they manifested in improving the navy, and keeping it in a state of efficiency, none of them neglected it, or suffered it to degenerate materially; and some exerted themselves to the utmost to render it more powerful, by building superior ships, and introducing better discipline and tactics. For this purpose, English and other foreign naval architects and shipwrights, and able English naval officers also, have been employed, and liberally rewarded for their services, during the last hundred years.

Some of the most noteworthy historical facts concerning the Russian navy may be here briefly mentioned. In the reign of the first Catharine, a British fleet blockaded the Russian ships at Cronstadt, &c., but no action took place. The second Catharine paid particular attention to the improvement of her navy; and her conquests in the East led to the first voyage of her ships from the Baltic to the Levant—for cruising about the Baltic had hitherto been all the Russian men-of-war had performed—and from that time a fleet was kept in the Black Sea. The famous victory gained by the Russian fleet, commanded by Orloff, over that of the Turks at this period, is too well known to need more than an allusion. It was fought in the Bay of Tshesme. When Britain commenced active operations against the 'armed neutrality' of the northern powers in 1801, Russia had a very large navy, but numbers of the vessels were unfit for actual service, and all were badly manned. Many of the best ships, moreover, were commanded by British officers, who, of course, gave notice that they would never act against their own country. Again, in 1808, when England was at war with Russia, with a view to aid Sweden, a strong fleet was sent up the Baltic under command of Admiral Saumarez. Some partial actions took place, one of which resulted in the capture of the Russian 74-gun ship, *Swecolod*, by Sir Samuel Hood; and a very gallant and entirely successful attack was also made on a flotilla of heavily armed gun-boats; Lieutenant Hawker, who commanded the British ship-boats on that occasion, being killed in the moment of victory.

When British and Russian squadrons next met, it was as allies at Navarino in 1827. On that occasion, the British had eleven ships, commanded by Admiral Codrington; the French six, commanded by Admiral de Rigny; and the Russians eight, commanded by Admiral Count Heiden. The brunt of the battle was borne—as always is the case under similar circumstances either by sea or land!—by the English, but both the French and Russian squadrons were of material service, and it is admitted that the Russians behaved well. Captain Crawford, in speaking of what then occurred, makes the following observation upon the officers of the Russian squadron:—'It was truly admirable to see the attention paid by the Russian officers to all that passed on board our ships, and the promptitude with which they applied their newly acquired knowledge. [True Russians! the best imitators in the world!] There is among the Russian naval officers and sailors an admirable *esprit de corps*, an emulation, a desire to do their best, an enthusiasm for their national fleet, and its prosperity.' This opinion of Captain Crawford's may be all very true as to the officers, but we certainly have every inclination to

question its correctness as concerns the Russian sailors. It may be almost superfluous, by the way, to remind the reader, that Navarino can hardly be termed a regular naval battle; and that, even unto this day, the Russian ships of war have never fought either a great battle of fleets, or a single ship-action on the open sea—nor, according to present appearances, have their officers the slightest intention to do so. It is worthy of remark, also, that when Peter the Great defeated and almost annihilated the Swedish fleet in 1715, he did so by unexpectedly attacking it with an overwhelming force; and we find something very similar to this re-enacted in the recent terrible catastrophe at Sinope. Anything in the shape of a fair, well-matched fight between Russian men-of-war and those of any other nation, is not yet recorded in history.

According to an account lying before us, the following was the total of the Russian navy during the war with Turkey in 1828–29:—'Ships of the line, 32; frigates, 25; corvettes and brigs, 20; brigantines, 7; cutters, 6; schooners, 84; galleys, 20; floating-batteries, 25; gun-boats, 121: total, 340. These 340 vessels had 6000 cannon, 33,000 sailors, 9000 marines, and 3000 gunners.' As a matter of historical interest, and to shew what a rapid increase of the naval force of Russia has taken place since that period, we may mention that, according to O'Byrne—a good authority, we believe—at the commencement of the present war, the Russian Baltic fleet alone comprised '30 ships of the line, all sailing vessels; 6 sailing frigates, 5 sailing brigs and corvettes, and 10 paddle-wheel steamers; besides the gun-boat flotilla and the miscellaneous craft, as schooners, transports, brigs, and yachts.' Of the above, 4 are first-raters of from 112 to 120 guns each. The Black Sea fleet, before the Allies invaded the Crimea, is stated, by the *Moniteur de la Flotte*, to have comprised 'a total of 17 ships of the line, 4 frigates, 5 corvettes or brigs, 82 vessels of inferior size, and 12 steamers; in all, 120 sail, mounting 2200 guns of every description.' Three of the steamers, the *Vladimir*, the *Bessarabia*, and the *Gromostetz*, are vessels of remarkable power, and mount guns of great range and calibre. We have also before us a different account of the Russian fleets, but it corresponds so nearly with the above, as to render recapitulation needless. Some additional particulars, however, are given in the summary, published a while ago in the *Fremden Blatt*, according to which the grand total of the Russian navy comprises 45 ships of the line, 30 frigates, 25 corvettes, 20 brigs, and several hundred gun-boats and steamers, manned in the aggregate with 50,000 men; 30,000 serving in the Baltic fleet, and 20,000 in that of the Black Sea. The four principal Russian three-deckers are the *Russia*, of 130 guns; *Twelve Apostles*, 120 guns; *Three Saints*, 120 guns; and *Warsaw*, 120 guns. It is well known that several of the Russian line-of-battle ships have been sunk at the entrance of the harbour of Sebastopol.

The late Emperor Nicholas improved and strengthened the Russian navy more than any of his predecessors. He seems to have done everything he could do to enhance its efficiency. Millions upon millions of pounds sterling did he expend on the docks and harbours of Cronstadt and Sebastopol; and in building ships of war, and obtaining competent foreign officers to discipline and teach their crews naval tactics, he grudged no amount of money, nor spared any labour in personal superintendence when that was practicable. Schools for naval cadets exist at St Petersburg, Archangel, Cronstadt, Odessa, and some other ports, maintained at great expense, and, it is generally affirmed, with very little profit, so far as the training of able officers is concerned, for it is admitted that few such have yet been 'raised'—to use an Americanism—in these institutions. On the whole, the expense of maintaining so great a navy must have long been an



enormous drain on the revenue of Russia. Kohl, the German traveller, remarks, that 'there is no other power in the world to which it is relatively so inordinately expensive to maintain a maritime force, notwithstanding the scanty pay of the seamen, nor any to whom it is relatively of so little advantage, as Russia.' How far the latter part of his opinion may be correct, it would perhaps be presumptuous in us to decide, but there can be no doubt that the first part is true enough.

Various very intelligible reasons have been assigned by different travellers why Russian men-of-war are such excessively costly machines. The whole system at the Imperial dockyards appears to be ingeniously devised to swallow up as much money for a given amount of labour as possible. For instance, huge ships of war are—or not long ago were—built at St Petersburg, and yet there is only seven or eight feet of water at that city. How, then, are these vessels to be got to Cronstadt, to be fitted out? By 'camels!' Kohl tells us that these camels are 'gigantic chests, big enough to hold a ship of the line. When the hull is built, and is ready to be sent down the Neva, such a chest is brought into the Admiralty dockyard, and filled with water till it sinks so deep as to admit the vessel to float in through an aperture in the side. This done, the water is pumped out again, when the camel begins to rise, till at last it is enabled to float down the river with its singular passenger. It is then towed by a steam-vessel to Cronstadt, and generally without accident, if wind and weather are favourable. Why so inconvenient a dockyard has not long ago been abandoned, it is difficult to conceive.' The cost of thus shifting the hulls of great ships is understood to be very considerable, and, of course, could be entirely obviated by building them at a place naturally adapted for the purpose. We presume, however, that the personal interests of some officials forbid that to be done. It is affirmed that all the contractors for the supply of materials, and all the officials of the Imperial dockyards, play into each other's hands, so as to speculate and defraud the government, by substituting inferior articles for those that have been paid for as first-rate. However this may be—and it is likely enough, if the universally received character of the Russians is not exaggerated—it is tolerably certain that the Russian men-of-war do not last more than half as long as English. Three reasons are alleged—inferiority of material; the freshness of the water at Cronstadt, added to the pressure and shocks from the ice; and the ravages of a small worm in the waters of the Black Sea harbours. As to the outward appearance of the vessels themselves, some are built on the lines of first-rate English ships, and undoubtedly are fine vessels, so far as model is concerned; but many other Russian men-of-war are said to be half a century backward in their build, resembling much the ships of St Vincent's and Nelson's days—short and deep, and consequently slow and unwieldy in manœuvring, and very unsteady in a heavy-rolling sea. Several of their best steamers have been built to order in England and elsewhere. As may be expected, the rigging and sails are of capital quality, and the guns are also excellent. Good order and cleanliness are observed on board—and that at any rate is something.

The following extract will give some idea of the kind of officers the Russian normal naval-schools have turned out:—'The fittings of the cabins are splendid in the extreme, according to the manners and customs of the Russian aristocracy. The Russian captains and admirals are not by any means bluff, bearish old tars of the Drake, Tromp, or Ruyter stamp. Slipped they are, and wrapped up in morning-gowns, and got up in the most splendid style of ease; they loil on soft sofas of purple velvet, reading French novels; or they sit at the piano by the hour, playing *Etudes par Chopin*. The fact is, the Russian naval officers care very little

for the profession; not that they are ignorant—the nautical academies at Oranienbaum, Petersburg, Cronstadt, Odessa, and Nicolajen, provide all sorts of theoretical knowledge—but for all that, it is not in the grain.' And Mr Oliphant tells us that 'it is maliciously said, that upon the few occasions the Russian fleet in the Black Sea have encountered a gale of wind, the greater part of the officers and men were always sea-sick.\* It is certain that they have sometimes been unable to tell whereabouts they were on their extensive cruising-ground.' Supposing there is no exaggeration in the above, we would yet remark, that even if the native Russian officers had a predilection for the sea, they have, in the great majority of instances, really no opportunity of acquiring sufficient practical knowledge of their profession; for even an Englishman—a born sailor, according to the opinion of continentals—could not become an able naval officer without many long years' experience of life afloat in active service.

Now for the Russian sailors—although, if what is generally asserted of them be at all correct, sailors they are not, but mere *soldiers on shipboard*. Personally, we know little of the Russian sailors, but that little certainly tends to confirm the accuracy of all we have read on the subject. We have seen them often enough on board their vessels in port; but one cannot tell what sort of stuff mariners are, unless one has an opportunity to observe them in the active performance of their duties at sea. On one occasion, indeed, we made a voyage in a vessel on board which a Russian from the banks of the Dwina served as one of the crew. Whether he had been regularly trained to the sea, we know not, but never did we see such a miserable caricature of a sailor. He appeared very willing to do his best, but he was literally fit for nothing but to pull his ounce at the fall of a tackle, for he was naturally incapable of performing a seaman's duties. Unquestionably, the Russians have no aptitude for maritime pursuits. 'Of all nations,' observes Mr Kohl, 'inhabiting modern Russia, hardly one is acquainted with or accustomed to the sea. The actual Russians—those in the heart of the country—having nothing to do with the sea, and the dwellers on the coast are everywhere colonists and strangers. Even of the maritime population, few are familiar with the ocean. The Lettes in Courland and Livonia ever held the "yure" (sea) in great dread; the Tatars of the south have always been shepherds, obtaining their foreign produce from foreign maritime nations; and the Cossacks never issued, except at intervals, from the interior of the country, to make predatory excursions on the sea. . . . Of the 30,000 sailors now serving in the Russian fleet, at least 24,000 have grown up at the plough and spade, and but 2000 or 3000 at the utmost have served any sort of apprenticeship on the Black Sea, or in the fishing-trade on the Northern and White Seas, and on the great rivers of the country.' Precious materials these wherewith to man three-deckers!

The Fins, and also the natives of the coast of Esthonia, one of the Baltic provinces, are, however, excellent seamen—especially the Fins, many of whom serve in foreign ships all over the world. But the population of Finland is so sparse, and the grown-up seamen are so apt to avail themselves of the earliest opportunity of quitting the paternal rule of the czar, in order to enter the merchant-service of foreign countries, where they will be in no danger of the knout, and have tenfold greater pay, that the actual number of them serving in the Russian navy is comparatively small; and the staple of the crews of

\* About sixteen years ago, the captain of the steamer between St Petersburg and Lübeck, in which the emperor himself was a partner, was confined to his state-room from sea-sickness the greater part of every voyage; his wife doing the honours of the table in his stead, and the mate acting as master.

Russian men-of-war, as a matter of necessity, consists of Russians proper, who dread the sea even more than Germans do—and that is saying not a little.

If an iron discipline could make seamen of the Russians, they would be everything that could be desired. As it is, they are drilled into exquisite machines, and will perform their assigned duties with the precision of clockwork; but beyond this they cannot go. They have no heart for the service—no inspiration—no national pride in their navy. A Russian man-of-war carries far more men—we have read nearly twice as many—than a British one of corresponding size. We need hardly explain why this is thought necessary. One writer says: 'The rules and regulations of the service alone determine the movements of the Russian sailor. . . . The various manœuvres of the fleet are executed with great precision; but it appears that every man has his peculiar post, and that he is fit for only one set of manipulations. Of course, practice makes him perfect; but the question is, how the same manœuvres are to be performed in battle, when many of the crew are killed or disabled? The Duke of York insisted on the same men being marines, gunners, and sailors; and surely his principle was the better one! . . . When the Russian sailor sees a stray rope, he does not coil it, and put it aside; he reports the matter to his lieutenant, and the lieutenant refers to the journal for the name of the man who has neglected his duty, and having found the culprit, he takes hold of his ears, and pulls him up to the neglected rope.' We think it right to make a remark on the above statement. In the British navy, and in every navy, in fact, as well as in the Russian, every man has an assigned station and set of duties: each seaman is stationed, by the first-lieutenant, at a particular part of the ship or rigging, and he must, when on duty, especially attend to just that particular piece of service, and no other. But the difference between the Russian seaman and the English is, if we apprehend rightly, the following:—The Russian can perform *only* one particular piece of duty, having been taught and trained to do that, and that alone; whereas the English seaman can not only do his own especial bit of duty—we mean, attend to the particular duty assigned to him for the time being—but he can also do any and every duty of a seaman and a man-of-war's-man. And even if the Russian seaman had aptitude to learn, he can have practice, in the Baltic at least, only about five months in the year.

In conclusion, we need not apologise for quoting the following daguerreotype picture of a Russian man-of-war's-man, from Mr Jesse:—'England can afford to give Russia the mechanical means of endeavouring to rival her—neither money nor ukase can create the British seaman. No; here the czar must halt. He may order ships, like the *Twelve Apostles*, to be built, and guns, from four-pounder Paixhans, to be cast in unlimited numbers; but crews to man either the one or the other, neither he nor his successors can ever hope to have. Russians are the after-guard of all the sailors in Europe. One cannot help smiling when contrasting the seamen of other nations with theirs. Look at a Blue-jacket in our own service: he is all ease and freedom, agile and muscular; his countenance is open, and his bearing independent; and though he shews implicit obedience under discipline, his demeanour is manly as well as respectful, and he is clean. A Russian sailor has no pretensions to be called one; his head is nearly shaved; and his jacket of green cloth, made like a dragon's, fits quite tight. This is buttoned all the way up in front, and padded out as an army tailor would make one for a young cornet. His lower extremities are cased in Wellingtons, and on his head is a worsted forage-cap, all on one side. If a mate, his pipe is stuck between the buttons of his jacket like an eye-glass; and last, though not least, when addressed

by his officer, he uncaps, and bringing his feet together, stands—O ye tars!—at what? "at ease?" O no! "at attention," with his little-fingers down the seams, and thumbs pointing upwards.'

### THE PRECIOUS STONE.

WALKING on the sea-shore one winter-day in one of our southern counties, and at low-water, it was my good-luck to pick up a stone, which, after a cursory examination of its surface, I decided on taking home, as I thought it bade fair to turn out well, and was likely to prove both valuable and interesting. Possessed with this idea, I cleansed it from the sand and other deposits which had rested on it, and laid it by in store, until time should allow of my investigating its pretensions more fully than I could under the circumstances of the moment.

Arrived at home, I set to work at once, and truly I was not disappointed. I had found a treasure, and one of which three months' possession has in no degree lessened my admiration. Now had I, by some odd chance, picked up such a jewel as the Koh-i-noor, or a sizeable match for Mr Hope's blue diamond, I feel pretty sure that I should have many more enviers and sympathisers than I shall have in my present possession; and, in fact, if the owner of either of these wonders was to offer me an exchange, his for mine—'an even-handed bargain'—I have little doubt that I should accept it: but I am pretty sure of one thing—and that is, that I have derived more true pleasure and profit from the contemplation of *my* stone, than I should ever have gained by gazing on the 'Mountain of Light'; and, setting aside commercial views, that I am better off in the possession of my own treasure, than I should have been in that of either of the magnificent jewels I have mentioned.

And now behold me as I settle myself in the evening for a conference with this silent yet animated friend. A clear flint-glass goblet, full of transparent sea-water, stands before me, and into this I drop my stone, which has before been lying in some pan or basin of water, together with other treasures. Supporting it with a couple of bits of lead wire, so that the water may entirely encircle it, and each side of the stone may be in turn presented to the light, I place a stout piece of lighted candle on the opposite side of the glass, so adjusted as to pour its rays full into the middle of the water; and putting my pocket-lens to my eye, I set myself to watch.

For some time, I see nothing but the stone itself, which is a bit of common red sandstone, about two inches in length, and perhaps an inch and a half in width, and an inch in thickness; its surface considerably incrustured with those little white stone-like coils and other shaped structures—the work of marine-worms, &c., which are so commonly to be seen on old oysters and other shells and stones by the sea-side—together with other odds and ends of inanimate matter. I watch carefully, for I can scarcely suppose that it is a 'city of the dead' I am looking at, and that all the clusters of stone-castles, houses, and huts on which I am gazing are completely tenantless. Presently, a slight movement is seen in several places at once, and I eagerly shift my lens, so as to make it bear on one of the parts where promise of life is thus held out; but my ardour causes my defeat, at least for a season, for all motion ceases; and where I had fancied I descried an active living creature, I see nothing but a little lump of limestone as big as a pin's head. However, my disappointment is but for a moment; for, in a few seconds, the sentinels who have thus peeped out having taken another look, and reported 'all right,' such a rush of life takes place as can only remind one of the appearance of a street when some grand procession enters it, and every inmate of every house

pops his or her head out of the window or door, full of excitement, every hand being thrown aloft, and flags and handkerchiefs waving; and where all before was stillness and silence, all is now animation and activity. There are ladies, rich in plumes and jewels, with velvet mantles and satin trimmings; there are delicate little girls, clad in pure white, and merry jumping boys; but they all keep their door-and-window look-out, and never leave their house. Yet, although, like Swiveller's 'Marchioness,' they can thus take but a very 'limited view of society,' the manners of the inhabitants of my little red-stone world are exceedingly pleasing and polite; none interferes with or jostles another; you never see them butting at each other, and making a stir, as tenants of closely-packed human habitations are apt to do; for if one little fishy inmate, on emerging from his door, touches the tentacles of another, and finds that bit of water preoccupied, he gently gives way, and either turns his body round in its case, and expands his plumes in another direction, or else pops back into his house, and leaves his neighbour in peaceable possession.

There is one kind of joyous-looking creature which suddenly dashes out on you with but short note of preparation. You perceive a little white stone-wall, like a wall of circumvallation, built of lime, and somewhat angular and rough in its construction, which encloses a space of from the eighth to the tenth of an inch in diameter; more or less, according to the size of the animal to be accommodated. Within this little fortress rests a shell composed of six valves, which, when the inhabitant is at rest, is closed tightly up, but which, when it is disposed to cast its nets into the surrounding waters—for it is an indefatigable fisherman—uncloses, and discovers a cluster of the most delicately formed filaments, looking, at its first appearance, like a hand with the fingers closed over the palm. These, however, seldom remain so long, for after one or two gentle movements, which seem as if the animal was reconnoitring, they spring aloft into the water with the action of a hand clutching at some object. This most curious and elegant little creature is the sessile barnacle, or acorn-shell (*Balanus*), several species of which are common on our shores. There are two species on my stone—one has brown tentacula, and its clutching action is much more incessant than that of the kind which most abounds, and which pleases me so much by its lively and vigorous movements. This, my favourite, is silvery white, except at the roots of the arms—as I must designate the organs which it throws out from its shell—where its tint is a rosy red. It is semi-transparent, very slight and light in form, and exceedingly active in movement; but—unlike the brown species, which throws out and retracts its arms with as much regularity as a thrasher throws his flail—it often remains suspended in the form of a many-rayed star for a minute at a time. But although the general action of the *balanus* is suspended for a period, the creature is not idle. Two of its tentacula, which are a little different in form from the rest—the lowest on each side—are busy enough; for ever and anon, first one, and then the other, jerks suddenly outwards with a rapid, eager motion, and then curves up to the centre of the animal—evidently conveying some titbit to the ever-ready mouth; an action which irresistibly reminds you of a child wiping out a treacle-jar or cream-pot with its fingers, and then tucking them into its mouth, licking them thoroughly, and returning to the charge each time with renewed delight and increased appetite for the scantily obtained dainty.

The structure of the *balanus* is wonderful, and very beautiful. I have described its habitation, but the animal itself is well worth notice. It consists of a body in organic connection with the case, formed, at the part which projects into the water, in the shape of a circle with a point rising from it. Round this circle

and point are set a series of about sixteen flexible arms, fringed on both sides with bristling points. These arms, when expanded, form a fan shaped like an oval with one end cut off, the arms being graduated in length, and the lower part much more than half the length of the upper pair. The cilia, or bristles, on these tentacula, are so arranged that those on one shall exactly meet the interspaces in its next neighbour; and thus, when the animal contracts and closes them in, they form a net of the finest meshes. These delicate organs the *balanus* suddenly jerks out from its shell; and the cilia or bristles on them being in constant motion, make a vortex in the water, which draws towards the net the animalcula on which the animal subsists. It then rapidly closes in the tentacles, and, as it were, draws the net enclosing its prey, which is no sooner consigned to the barnacle's devouring maw, than the apparatus is again cast forth; and this action is repeated about once in each second.

Of these amusing creatures, there are so many on my stone that I have never been able to count them. When I have counted twenty or so, I find, on looking back, that at least double the number have appeared; or else, when I am busy in taking the census, a slight movement of the table tilts over the stone, and, quick as lightning, every little fellow, wheresoever he may be, rushes into his house, and lies snug till the alarm has passed. But if no such catastrophe happens, and all remains still, whilst I am watching these fishers, which are always the first living creatures to appear, I see various other tribes of beautiful creatures beginning to peep out at their doors—at first, shy and timid, and ready to start back if a breath ruffles the water, but by degrees gaining courage, and coming forth in their full proportions, as the French fairy tale says, 'each one more beautiful than the other.' But we must look at each tribe separately. First, then, for the *Serpula*. Most people must have observed a sort of semi-cylindrical stone-case wreathed into sundry convolutions and snake-like contortions, with which old sea-beaten shells and stones are incrustated: there are usually plenty of them on the shell of the oysters which are sold in the market. These little coils are the cells of a worm (*Annelide serpula*), and are, like those of the *balani*, constructed by the animal itself with lime, which it has the power of secreting from the surrounding water; and as the worm grows larger, and requires more room, it adds a wider entrance to its house, thus securing at the same time greater width and length. This it does repeatedly in the course of its growth; and the new part of the edifice, and indeed each succeeding alteration, is marked by little protuberances where the old and new portions unite. At the mouth of one of these cases, you will see thrust out, gently and slowly, a flat substance, which has hitherto stopped up the mouth of the cell, as a cork stops the mouth of a bottle. This stopper—for so this organ is emphatically called—advances further and further, and rises to about the height of the fourth of an inch, and you then see that it is richly coloured, and in the form of a trumpet, narrowing down to a thin neck where it joins the body of the animal. In some instances, this stopper is of a brilliant rose colour; in others, of purple, orange, and white, all beautifully blended in an elegant pattern; in others, it is brown and white, olive and white, violet, or some other colour. As this rises, you begin to perceive that it is connected with another member, for a mass of tentacles, partaking more or less of the colour of the stopper, encircles one side of it. Now, keep quite still, and watch, and you will see a lovely sight, especially if you have a lens of power enough to enable you to observe the minutiae of the animal's structure. I have described the animal in its rise as consisting of a mass, and this is the fact; but when it has attained the length of about the third of an inch—with the lens, it will of course appear much



longer, but this is its *real size*—you start with surprise to see this mass suddenly spread open like a parasol, and a waved and spreading coronal of plumes, such as might adorn a Mexican prince, rise to view; you have just time to see that this rich plume, or rather double semicircle of plumes, is of the most glowing scarlet and white, or some other gorgeous tint, when, lo! your start and exclamation send back the pretty creature in affright, and it is gone. Like the sultan when Aladin's palace rose to view, you start with delight at its appearance; and, like him, rub your eyes, and wonder over its disappearance. But it is gone; and so entirely, that you can hardly believe the fairy vision ever existed. However, it does not stay long out of sight. Grown bold by its first essay, and finding all quiet, it and a dozen more rise into view, and flash open their splendid coronets in all directions. It would be vain to attempt to describe their dyes. My stone is rich in these, yet not so rich as a shell that I have seen, on which thirty-eight of these lovely objects have been expanded at the same moment—some, the purest white on a base of orange-red; others, scarlet, the tentacles ringed and tipped with white; and some richly tinged with olive-brown, lilac, and white, singularly like small exquisitely tinted passion-flowers. Then there are varieties, some of which exhibit a bluish hue, the true colour being almost white, but catching a prismatic colour from the light, like that on the pendent of a lustre when it divides a ray of the sun. Another I have is of a deep violet, with a ring of white round the stoppers; in fact, there is no end to the variety of hues which these elegant little creatures present.

Having myself sought through all the books which the library of a museum of natural history could afford me, for some account of the structure of these annelids, and in vain, I was delighted lately to find in Mr Gosse's *Aquarium* a clear and most interesting description of them; and as others may wish for information concerning these interesting objects beyond that of a mere description of their appearance, I will transcribe a part of his account, only premising that the species he describes are larger than those on my stone or shell, and the inhabitants of deep water. The structure of both is, however, so much the same, that the description will answer equally well for either, except in respect of size, in which the deep-water species (*Serpula contortuplicata*) exceed the littoral species (*S. triquetra*).

After describing the beautiful coloured fans of which I have spoken, he says: 'Take your pocket-lens now, and examine the structure of these brilliant organs in detail. Presto! on the slightest movement of your hand towards him, he is gone! He has retreated like a lightning-flash into his tube. But did you notice how cleverly, as he went, he shut the door after him? A most marvellous contrivance is here. Watch it as it again protrudes. There is a solid organ, exactly conical, seated at the end of a long flexible stem, which forms the *stopper*; it is one of a pair of tentacles; but as only one could be of any service as a stopper, one only is developed, the other being minute. This stopper is very beautiful; it is always richly coloured, usually orange or vermilion, sometimes varied with pure white; its flat extremity or top is made up of ridges, which run from the centre to the circumference, where they project in tiny teeth of the most exquisite regularity. The fan-like expansions are formed of radiating filaments, also very brilliant in hue, which are the breathing organs, separating the oxygen from the currents of water which play along their ciliated surfaces.

'There is no distinct head in these animals, but the organs I have described are protected by a sort of projecting mantle or hood, beneath which is the orifice of the stomach. The mechanism by which the serpula

projects its body from the shelly tube, and by which it withdraws on alarm with such inconceivable rapidity, is wondrously curious. Behind the head—or what, for convenience, may be so termed—the sides of the body are cut into nipple-like feet, about seven pair in all, which are perforated, and carry so many bundles of fine, elastic, horny bristles, like the hair of a camel's-hair pencil, each pencil carrying from twenty to thirty bristles. By means of suitable muscles, the pencils are pushed out to their full length, or withdrawn so as to be wholly sheathed in the foot. Now, let us look at the structure of these bristles. A few are simple hairs, but the majority are instruments of elaborate workmanship, though high powers of the microscope are needful to display them well. Each bristle consists of a transparent, yellow, horny shaft, the extremity of which dilates into a slightly enlarged knob. This is cleft into four points, three of which are minute, but the fourth is developed into a long, slightly divergent, highly elastic, tapering, and finely pointed spear.' With these curious organs, the serpula effects its exit from its tube; but there is another and still more curious apparatus provided, to enable it to make its sudden dash back into its castle—so elaborate, that its details would occupy too much space for insertion; but we may just intimate that 1900 prehensile organs, furnished with suitable muscles, are supplied to this tiny worm—which seldom exceeds an inch or an inch and a half in length—to enable it to retreat; and that it is calculated that from thirteen to fourteen thousand teeth are employed to lay hold on the membrane of the cell when the serpula chooses to retire. 'No wonder,' says Mr Gosse, 'with so many grappling-hooks, that the retreat is so rapidly effected.'

But there are other treasures on my stone besides the balani and serpule. As I glance over its thickly populated sides, I discern some minute fronds of most vivid green: these are tiny plants of sea-weed (*Ulva latissima*), which have taken root, and now grow and flourish on their little rock in this diminutive ocean with as much vigour and beauty as if in the deep wide sea; and here and there I see some little roving creature that 'wanders free,' leading a sort of gipsy-life, and having no fixed habitation. A very small green shrimp-like animal is one of these; and another is a queer creature, which always reminds me of the 'laidly worm' of ancient ballads. This strange reptile is a reddish worm, its rings well defined, its head and tail wedge-shaped; and these would be undistinguishable the one from the other, but for a pair of wicked-looking black eyes which adorn one extremity, and give an idea that it is the head. Other distinction has it none, at least not that I can perceive under my pocket-lens, for it progresses equally well in either direction. Round the neck of this 'laidly worm' is a fringe of what appears to be smaller worms: they are annulated exactly like the body, of the same colour, and in all respects resembling the body of the worm to which they are appendages. I at first thought they were young ones, but on watching them, I found that they were attached to the body in a whorl at about a fourth part of its length. These—which I imagine to be tentacles—are continually writhing in the most strange contortions, spreading forwards into the water, or back round the body; lengthening to a wonderful length, and then contracting themselves, or some two or three of their number, into a mere knob, and weaving and interlacing with each other until you would think they were so tied up in knots that they could never be untied—when, lo! up goes the whole party quite free, and stretching hither and thither in curling Medusean clustres. What kind of annelide this is, I know not, but I must confess that it is so unnatural and wild-looking an object, that if it were more than about half an inch in length, I do not think I should be disposed to meddle much with my stone



until I had served it with a writ of ejection, and seen it fairly dislodged. However, this 'ugglesome beast' seldom troubles me, for his dwelling is in some secluded cleft of the stone, and he annoys me but little with his writhings.

Another wanderer is a long and very beautiful nereis-worm, about an inch and a half in length, and thin as a fine thread. He is pure white, beautifully marked with green; and as he glides in and out between the serpulæ, &c., reminds one of a very long train of railway-carriages seen from a distance—now sweeping round a corner on the road, then entering and emerging from a tunnel, but ever gliding on with an even and sliding sort of movement peculiar to itself.

One day, as I glanced over my living creatures and their homes, I perceived that there had been several additions to the colony since I had last seen it, and that several new houses had been built and were inhabited. They were quite in a different style of architecture from the last, being little round towers shooting straight up from the stone, and looking like the Scottish Border towers in which such men as Johnny Armstrong used to live, and from which they kept watch, and on occasion made a swoop on the country, and lifted cattle, &c., at pleasure. These towers, of horny substance, brown and slightly rough-cast, and tipped with red, for about one-third of their height were opaque below, but the upper part semi-transparent. As I watched, I observed the upper portion of one to grow denser, and accordingly I began to expect the inhabitant to issue forth and shew himself, which in process of time he did. There were several of these towers; but as they were not all occupied by the same description of tenants, I must describe each in its turn, but shortly, for space forbids much extension of my subject. From some of these, then, I saw appear a little pellucid spine, white as crystal, and about the sixteenth of an inch high, and the size of a small pin; this shot up as the tube of a microscope springs from its sheath, remained suspended for an instant, and then threw open about twenty glistening tentacles, in the form of a delicate little star. Several of these lovely little zoophytes sprang up into view at once in different parts of the stone, and from day to day their numbers have been continually increasing. Besides these pearly flowers, which fluctuate in form, now capping upwards, then bending down, and then resting in the form of a flat star, are others much larger, and of a rosy-red hue: these are formed of twelve feathered plumes, rising, like the feathers of a shuttle-cock, in a circle wider at the top than at the base. These plumes wave irrespectively of each other, with a most graceful and lovely motion. Each is formed with a sharp smooth point which arches over, and at about a third part of its length the quill becomes densely feathered on both sides with ciliated tentacles. I have seen these stars, nearly white, assuming the most exquisite iridescent hues; but they were in general of a red tint. The whole corall has power of consentaneous as well as of separate motion, and the changes in its position and form are incessant: sometimes it droops and bends over, then turns entirely round in its case, or waves one or two of its plumes inward or out, as the case may be, with a sudden flashing movement, exceedingly easy and graceful.

This latter, as well as the serpulæ, classes with the annelidæ, or worm family, and so does one other highly amusing creature with which both stone and shell abound, and the description of which must close my eulogy. This sprightly creature lives in a poly-pidom, or case, of the turret form, so like those from which both the white star-shaped zoophyte and the 'rosy star' inhabit, that you do not know until the inmate appears which sort of animal you are to expect. If you closely observe, you will, however,

soon see that from the greater peak of these little turrets, instead of either a silvery point or a tuft of red filaments, it is two *loops* which first greet your sight—small, thread-like, semi-transparent loops. Watch them for a moment, and you will see them grow longer and longer, until at last one end of each escapes from the tube, and you discover that it is a pair of horn-like tentacles, of half an inch or more in length, which have thus been looped up for the convenience of packing. These flexible and nearly transparent organs are ever in motion, waving hither and thither in the water—now both aloft; now one grovelling on the ground, and *dapping*, like an angler's line, into every crack and crevice near, slipping into the cavernous mouth of a serpulæ-case, or angling in the very middle of an acorn-shell; whilst the other whisks about in the waters alone. Now these long horns twist together, then separate, and again resume their everlasting tossing, continually reminding one of the goblin page in the *Lay of the Last Minstrel*, who is endlessly tossing his arms, and crying 'Lost! lost! lost!' Never did any creature exist who gave such an impressive idea of *unrest*, for, day and night, these arms are ever at work; nor have I ever seen them withdrawn, unless for a few moments, when frightened into retreat. In a few minutes after these strange creatures have first emerged, they become quite at their ease, and you then perceive that these restless organs belong to a body as restless as themselves—a pure white, glassy-looking little body, which is seen to rise from the mouth of the tube, and lean out of his house so far as to make you almost disposed to shout out, 'Take care!' for he looks like a child leaning so far out of the window as to be likely to lose his balance, and tumble over. But not he! Over he leans, the most wild and wicked-looking creature you can imagine; and presently dashing forward, he seizes in his mouth a branch of a most delicate and exquisite little sparkling zoophyte, with which the stone is closely beset, and snapping it off, bears his prey in triumph into his case, like the Ogre of fairy tale, no doubt there to devour him at his leisure. This pretty zoophyte, on which this wretched little harpy-like animal is so fond of feeding, is worthy of a few words, as, though very minute, its species is one of the most abundant, as well as one of the most lovely, in my marine city. I had often observed that the rock on which my city was built, and all the houses and other buildings on it, were constantly covered with what I took to be a deposit from the water. I therefore, with the feather-end of a pen, carefully brushed it all over in water, and soon saw that all was smooth and clean; but, rather to my annoyance, after a few minutes I found this furry appearance was as bad as ever. Again I brushed; and again, after a short time, I found that it had been all in vain. On this, I took a more powerful magnifier, and, to my great delight, discovered that what I had taken for deposit, was in fact a perfect forest of living creatures! The whole of all the solid material on my stone was closely set with a delicate glittering little zoophyte, like fern-leaves, and small shrubs made of ice, as white and pure-looking as the hoar-frost, and as varied and beautiful in their forms as that fairy-like production ever can be. I touched them with the feather, and down they sank into little lumps of jelly, but only to reappear as soon as all was still—their lovely stems, branches, and leaves all of one homogeneous substance, and waving in the water like frosted trees under the influence of a stirring breeze in winter.

In describing the produce of my precious stone, I have not attempted to afford to my readers many scientific details which an experienced zoologist would require—my aim being not to assist the scientific, but to interest the unlearned; and I trust enough has been said to lead the minds of some to inquire into these

matters a little for themselves; and I can assure those who feel disposed to do so, that if they once begin to traverse a portion of any one of the fields of nature, they will find so much to interest them, that whatever they may look back on hereafter with regret and sorrow in their past lives, it will surely not be on the hours they have spent in examination of the wonderful works of creation.

#### AN ALIBI AND ITS RESULTS.

A *PIECE* has lately been produced with much success at one of the London theatres, the interest of which turns entirely upon the supposed guilt of an innocent man. His striking resemblance to the true culprit leads to the mistake, which, upon the stage, is happily rectified before the conclusion of the drama. The real incident upon which the piece is founded had a very different termination, for the supposed murderer of the courier of Lyon actually died on the scaffold. The witnesses upon whose testimony he was condemned had made a mistake as to the identity of the man, and the fatal error was not discovered until it was too late. Some persons may imagine that such terrible mistakes are now-a-days impossible; or, at all events, that although our lively neighbours on the other side of the Channel may possibly be misled at times by their fancies, such things cannot happen in this matter-of-fact country, where the suspected criminal has every means of defence at his command, provided he can pay for it, and even if he cannot, where he can reckon at least, with certainty, upon a public trial before a jury of his fellow-citizens. I wish with all my heart that I could subscribe to this comfortable doctrine, but sad experience forbids. I am very far, indeed, from asserting that an innocent man is often mistaken for a guilty one in our criminal courts; but such mistakes do occur, as those who are conversant with such matters well know. Some of my readers may be startled at this announcement. Let those who doubt it, peruse the following simple narrative, the details of which are strictly true.

It is not many months since the inhabitants of the town and county of D— were kept in considerable alarm by the frequent burglaries which were committed in the district. One of these attracted especial attention from the systematic mode in which it was effected, and the amount of property carried away. The robbers, five or six in number, and all completely masked, made their way, in the middle of the night, into the residence of a wealthy farmer, and after rousing the inmates from their beds, obliged them to give up all the money and plate in the house, amounting in value to a good many hundred pounds. After plundering the house, and taking effectual precautions against a surprise, the burglars sat down and regaled themselves upon the best cheer the premises afforded. Towards daybreak, they at length took their departure, leaving their victims apparently too much stupefied with surprise and alarm to make any attempt at the pursuit and discovery of the depredators.

This outrage was committed in the middle of summer; and shortly after daybreak, on the same morning, two men were observed, about a mile from the scene of the robbery, hurrying along the high-road which led to the town of D—, and which lay a few miles distant. One of them carried a bundle in his hand, and a county constable who happened to meet them, asked what it contained. The man thus accosted returned an evasive answer, and quickened his speed. The constable then insisted upon examining the bundle; the man resolutely refused, and after a brief altercation, drew a pistol from his pocket, discharged it at the officer, dashed through a hedge, and fled across the fields. Fortunately, the shot did not take effect,

and the constable immediately followed the fugitives, for both the men took to flight immediately after the pistol was fired. A bricklayer, proceeding to his work, encountered them as they were hastily crossing a stile thus pursued. He attempted to seize one of the men, but failed; and they soon afterwards reached a wood, where all trace of the fugitives was lost.

The police of the district very naturally concluded, that these two men were concerned in the daring burglary which I have described, and every effort was made for their apprehension. Indeed, they seemed to afford the only clue to a discovery of the gang, as, from the circumstance of the whole of them being closely masked while engaged in the robbery, neither the master of the house nor any of his servants could undertake to identify one of them. After an incessant search of several weeks, a man was at length apprehended on suspicion in the town of D—. On examination before the magistrate, the county constable deposed that the prisoner was the person whom he had met on the morning of the robbery, and who had fired a pistol at him, and then made his escape. This witness was corroborated by the bricklayer, who had heard the report of the pistol, and who had attempted to stop the fugitives, one of whom he pronounced to be the prisoner. Upon this testimony, the latter—of whom, I may observe, that the police knew nothing previously—was committed for trial at the ensuing assizes.

Happening to be at D— at the time, and feeling some interest in the case, I obtained, not without difficulty, a seat in court on the morning of the trial. My curiosity was not singular, for I found the building crowded in every part, and many of the gentry of the district were provided with places on the bench. The prisoner on entering the dock, was closely scrutinized by the more eager portion of the audience, but his appearance presented none of those indications of villainy which the curious in such matters are apt to detect in conspicuous criminals. He was a tall man, about thirty years of age, of a powerful and active frame, and with a countenance of greater intelligence than is usually observed among the class to which he professed to belong—that of day-labourers. His clothes, which were coarse but clean, were in keeping with his professed occupation. He looked anxiously around the court for his counsel, with whom he conversed earnestly over the railing of the dock while the jury were being sworn; and when called upon to plead, he said he was 'not guilty,' in a very decided tone. The trial proceeded, and the first witnesses called were the gentleman whose house had been broken into, and his servants. They detailed minutely all the circumstances connected with the burglary, and astonished their auditors with a relation of the cool proceedings of the robbers. One of them, according to the master of the house, sat down at the piano, while his companions were regaling themselves with wine and spirits in the drawing-room, and played several airs with the rapidity and finish of a professed artist. 'You are surprised,' said this accomplished burglar, still wearing his mask, to the astonished host. 'Let me tell you, old fellow, that I am a better educated man than you are;' a proposition which, under the circumstances, no one ventured to dispute.

'I'm blowed,' whispered a rough voice behind me, 'if it was that ere chap in the dock as played on the pianny!'

As I glanced at the prisoner's sunburnt hands, hardened with the toil of twenty years, I felt the justice of this remark, which was made by a man in a working-dress in the crowd. But this circumstance told but slightly in favour of the prisoner, as it was clearly shewn that there were five or six men engaged in the robbery. The task still remained of identifying the individual in the dock as one of them, and this the inmates of the house all failed to do. The robbers had

been all so carefully masked, that the countenance of not one of them was seen even for an instant. So far as the case had gone, there was not a shadow of evidence against the prisoner.

The next witness produced was the police-officer who had met the two men under very suspicious circumstances early on the morning of the robbery. He stated, that the one who carried the bundle, and who had fired a pistol at him on his attempting to examine its contents, was the prisoner at the bar. This witness was most severely cross-examined by the prisoner's counsel, an advocate of great experience and skill, but without effect. The constable maintained, that he had not the slightest doubt as to the prisoner's identity; and the bricklayer, who was next examined, and who had attempted to seize the supposed robbers while they were escaping across the fields, spoke with equal confidence; and his testimony was equally unshaken by the prisoner's advocate. The whole case against the man at the bar rested upon the veracity of these two witnesses. No other evidence was adduced which either directly or indirectly affected him.

The case for the prosecution being closed, the counsel for the prisoner shortly stated the nature of the defence he was about to offer to the jury. It was simply, in legal parlance, an *alibi*. He assured the jury, that the two witnesses upon whose testimony alone they were called upon to convict the prisoner, were totally mistaken as to the identity of the man. He hoped to prove that at the moment when the constable met the two suspected persons on the road, his client was at home, and in his bed, in the town of D—, at the distance of five or six miles from the spot. He reminded the jury of the fatal mistakes which have been made in courts of justice with regard to the identity of individuals; and after dwelling earnestly on the previous unblemished character of the prisoner, concluded by expressing a confident hope that he would be acquitted of the heavy charge preferred against him.

It has been remarked, that an *alibi* is either the very best or the very worst defence that can be presented to a jury. If they believe in it, it is of course conclusive of the prisoner's innocence. If they do not, his conviction is all but sure to follow; because the attempt to impose upon them by means of a false defence, as they consider it to be, most materially strengthens the presumption of his guilt. The result of this trial fully bears out the truth of the latter proposition. A variety of witnesses were called to prove that, on the night of the robbery, the prisoner had returned to his lodgings at his ordinary hour, and that he had retired to bed even earlier than usual. Several of them, moreover, swore that he could not have left the house during the night without their knowledge; and the pertinacity with which they insisted upon this point, evidently created suspicion in the minds both of the judge and the jury. The prisoner lived in a lodging-house where there were many other inmates; and it was by no means improbable, that several of his fellow-lodgers should agree in concocting the story which each of them told in succession so glibly from the witness-box. They unfortunately proved too much in stating that he had gone to bed even earlier than usual, and that he could not possibly have left the house without their knowledge. Neither of these statements was inconsistent with truth, yet they had a strong appearance of being strained to suit a purpose. It was also an unfortunate circumstance for the prisoner, that all the witnesses called on his behalf were inmates of the same dwelling with himself. They were all, in fact, his own intimate associates. No stranger or disinterested person was called to confirm this doubtful testimony; and it was felt that the prisoner had not improved his chances of an acquittal by the defence he had offered to the jury. They did

not, in fact, believe his witnesses, but returned a verdict of guilty after a very brief consultation.

The prisoner seemed surprised and excited at the result, and protested in the most vehement manner that he was innocent. The judge, in passing sentence, said that he entirely agreed with the jury in the conclusion to which they had come. The prisoner was condemned to be transported for life.

'I would rather you would hang me at once!' exclaimed the man with an earnestness of tone and gesture which produced a marked sensation in the court; but he was immediately removed. One of the most experienced detective-officers in the kingdom, and who had been employed in getting up evidence in the case, happened to be standing by me at this moment, and he seemed struck with the earnestness of the prisoner's manner. 'It would be a sad thing,' he said, 'if the man were innocent after all.' The reflection coming from such a quarter naturally deepened in my mind the impression created by this painful scene. But such impressions are rarely lasting in a criminal court of justice. In the course of a few minutes, there was another prisoner in the dock, and the court, and jury, and spectators, including myself, were soon occupied with the details of a fresh trial.

Several months passed, and the man I had seen tried and condemned at D— was undergoing the usual imprisonment to which convicts are subjected previous to transportation, when a remarkable incident occurred. A convict, who was confined in the same jail, and who was also under sentence of banishment for another offence, confessed to the chaplain that he had been a party to the robbery described in the beginning of this paper. He further stated, that his fellow-prisoner who had been convicted at D—, had neither been one of the party, nor in any way connected with the affair. He declared that he had never known, nor even seen the man until they met beneath the prison roof; and that the two witnesses upon whose testimony he had been convicted, must have been mistaken as to his identity. This startling confession was at first regarded as a fabrication by the prison authorities; but further reflection shewed that it might be consistent with the truth. The person who made it had no conceivable motive for inventing the story. He was already condemned to transportation, and it was not probable that the confession of another serious crime would lead to a mitigation of his punishment. The affair came to the knowledge of certain influential persons in the neighbourhood, and through their exertions a searching investigation was made into the whole case, and particularly into the evidence adduced to prove the *alibi* of the prisoner at the time the robbery was committed. The result convinced them that his defence had been a true one, and that the two witnesses who swore that he was the man whom they met on the morning of the robbery, had made a mistake as to his identity. A correspondence ensued with head-quarters, and the innocent convict was very shortly afterwards discharged from prison with a free pardon in his pocket.

'A free pardon for what?' the reader may exclaim. 'It was admitted by the authorities that the man was innocent.' It may be also asked, whether the victim of this cruel mistake was not entitled to compensation in some shape for the wrongs that he had suffered. From the fallibility of human testimony, such mistakes may be at times unavoidable, but when they are discovered and acknowledged, is there no reparation due to the innocent victim? The law makes no provision of any kind for cases of this description; but a very distinguished lawyer and legislator was of opinion, that this was a defect which ought to be remedied. The late Sir Samuel Romilly contended, that where an innocent man was proved to have been erroneously convicted and punished, he ought to be compensated by the

state. The equity of this proposition can hardly be doubted, nor does there appear to be any substantial reason why it should not be carried into effect. But there is a reflection of a more painful nature which arises from a consideration of this case. If it had occurred at a period within the remembrance of many of my readers—namely, when house-breaking by night was a capital crime—the man whom I saw convicted at D— would, in all probability, have been executed within eight-and-forty hours of his condemnation, and his innocence, like that of the supposed murderer of the courier of Lyon, would have been established too late. Happily, the humane spirit of modern legislation rendered such a result impossible; but we cannot look back to the more rigorous practice of even comparatively recent times, without misgivings as to the judicial blunders which, in the indecent haste with which our criminals were then hurried out of the world, there is but too much reason to fear must have been committed.

#### WHAT IS NOT ETIQUETTE IN ENGLAND.

The following piece of drollery on this subject, containing some truths, along with a few absurdities, is given in Mr W. Blanchard Jerrold's work, entitled *Imperial Paris*. A Frenchman is supposed to be speaking. In England, 'it is not etiquette to go to the Opera with the smallest sprig upon the waistcoat or the cravat; to take soup twice; to salute a lady first; to ride in an omnibus; to go to a party before ten or eleven o'clock, or to a ball before midnight; to drink beer at table without giving back your glass at once to the servant. It is not etiquette to refrain a day from shaving; to have an appetite; to offer anything to drink to a person of high rank; to appear surprised when the ladies leave the table at dessert time—that hour which is so charming with us. It is not etiquette to dress in black in the morning, nor in colours in the evening. It is not etiquette to address a lady without adding her Christian name. To speak to a person, on any pretext, without having been presented; to knock at a door quietly; to have the smallest particle of mud upon the boot, even in the most unfavourable weather; to have pence in your pocket; to wear the hair cut close; to have a white hat; to exhibit a decoration or two; to wear braces, or a small or large beard—to do any of these things is to forget etiquette. But that which violates etiquette in England more than anything else is—want of money. Ruin yourself—run into debt—nobody will mind this; but, above all, be a spendthrift. If, when a foreigner arrives in London, it becomes known that he lodges in one of the economical hotels near Leicester Square, he is lost to certain society. Never will an equipage, nor even the card of a lord, wander thither.'

#### NEW DOVE-TAILING MACHINE.

We find the following account of a newly invented machine in a number of the *New York Tribune*:—'Every one is aware that the ordinary process of making bureau-drawers, and other case-work, is very slow and tedious. A fast workman can put together only thirty or forty drawers in a day. Now, a machine has been invented by Mr Burley of Boston, by which from 75 to 100 may be dovetailed in an hour, or from 800 to 1000 per day; and the work appears to be executed in a neater and more substantial manner than when performed in the ordinary way. The saving thus made, it is stated, is equal to 25 cents on each bureau manufactured: of course, a great revolution is to be effected in the business of making furniture. The machine is very simple in construction, and not liable to get out of repair, performing its work in the best manner—better, in fact, than it can be done by hand. The machine occupies a limited space; is not expensive; and any establishment in which any considerable amount of work is performed, will find it an object to obtain one, for it will pay for itself in a short time. It appears to us to be deserving of special attention from those engaged in the manufacture and sale of furniture.'

#### THE LAST NIGHT OF THE GIRONDINS.

BY MARIE J. EWEN.

A HALL for solemn banquet decked, but not for festal glee;  
A voice of converse high, but not the sound of revelry;  
And richest viands, choicest wines, and gold and gems  
were there;  
And perfumes from the far, far East came through the  
midnight air.

And vases of rich traceried work were glittering around—  
The crystal bright, the silver white, and all with garlands  
crowned;  
For flowers were there—the pure, the sweet—a bright and  
radiant wreath,  
Amid that lighted prison-hall, to grace the feast of death.

And there were they, the 'hero-men,' with lofty 'lighted  
brows'—  
The doomed, whose fire and eloquence once thrilled through  
patriot vows;  
And still from soul and lip inspired, the sweetest accents fell,  
As 'mid that hour of strange wild dread, they murmured  
forth farewell!

An awful 'band, for 'one was not'—he lay beside them  
there—  
Whose hand had 'forced the gates of death,' in the night  
of his despair;  
And when the morrow's sun shall come to chase the  
shadows dim,  
So will the dead Valazé's friends arise and follow him.

And mingled with the breath of flowers, arose the voice of  
song,  
To steep in rapture high the soul of that devoted throng;  
And there spake one amid the pause of music's trancing  
strain:  
'Courage! my friends; in yon far land we yet may meet  
again!'

Though shades of death were round them there, yet  
burning thoughts arose  
In words from lips soul-eloquent, to shake the dread repose;  
But chief was heard the voice of one with glad inspiring  
strain:  
'Courage! my friends; in that far land we yet may meet  
again!'

#### NEWSPAPER POETRY.

Perhaps it is betraying a secret of the sanctum, says an American paper, but we cannot help wondering why most of the anonymous effusions that sigh over reminiscences of 'boyhood,' come to us in delicate female handwriting; and why those purporting to be indited by unhappy maidens, are invariably in masculine chirography. If manuscripts were published as well as sentiments, readers would be astonished to see with what a steady hand 'Thoughts of a Dying Old Man' are penned; and how little knowledge critics of the sublime sometimes evince of Webster's Spelling-book. Romances of foreign lands generally come from people who have never seen salt-water, and stories of humble life from those who would be shocked at an iron spoon. Everybody thinks there is poetry in everybody's life but his own. If people only wrote about what they knew, and not about what they imagined, what tons of trash this world would have been spared from reading!

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